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Local History & Genealogy Department
Belcher Family History

Belcher, Herman

Oct. 22, 2003

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BELCHER

Herman Dawson Belcher, Sr., 63, of Brent, Ala., died Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2003, at his residence.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Heidi Belcher.

Survivors include three sons, Herman Belcher, Jr. of Columbus, Ohio, William Edwin Belcher, Columbus, Ohio, and Richard Belcher, Columbus, Ohio; two daughters, Brigitte J. Men, Hurley, Miss, and Catherine Garner, Pascagoula, Miss.; two brothers, Bruce Belcher of Brent, Ala. and Jimmy Belcher of Brent, Ala.; seven grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

Pallbearers will be Herman Belcher, William Belcher, Tony Belcher, John Belcher and Bill Belcher.

Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 24, at Friendship Bible Methodist Church.

Funeral service will be 11 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 25, at Friendship Bible Methodist Church.

Interment will be in Friendship Bible Methodist Cemetery.

Arrangements by Rockco's Funeral Home, Inc., Centreville, Ala.

Feb. 9, 2003

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A TIME TO HEAL

A month after being critically burned in a fireworks accident, Ashleigh Belcher is bouncing back



Staff Photo/Christy Jernigan

A month ago, Ashleigh Belcher was caught in a fireworks accident that left her with second- and third-degree burns on her arms, hands, chest, head, leg and back. But Ashleigh is on the mend. "I've got to get my fingers to where I can write," she said after visiting her third-grade class at Lake Elementary School Friday.

■ Friend panicked when fire started; girls trapped in van

By MOLLIE REEVES
Mississippi Press Staff

OCEAN SPRINGS — Ashleigh Belcher wears burn gloves on her hands, can't hold a pencil and still suffers six open wounds. But a month after a fireworks accident that nearly killed her and a playmate, what the 11-year-old wants most now is to get back to school.

She took a step on that road to recovery Friday by visiting with her class at Lake Elementary School, a day after being released from Shriners Hospital in Galveston, Texas. "I remember everything,"



Staff Photo/Christy Jernigan

Ashleigh Belcher, second from right, and her brother Morgan, left, and sister Kristen sing along with their father, William Belcher, Saturday.

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Burn victim

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Ashleigh said of the fire that left her with second- and third-degree burns on her arms, hands, chest, head, leg and back.

She and her friend Jenna Kennedy, 10, were sitting in the van waiting for her mother, she said. Her mother's boyfriend's son opened the sliding door of the van and put a box of fireworks he had found in the neighbor's trash inside, she said.

He lit one of the fireworks and raised his arm to throw it, Ashleigh said, and as he did, sparks landed on the floor. "He tried to stomp them out, but the stomping just made it worse."

According to Ashleigh, the boy panicked and slammed the door, leaving the girls trapped inside. They ran to the back. "I was in front of Jenna," said Ashleigh, "and she pushed me down, because I was burning. It all happened real quick."

"I remember blackish green smoke," Ashleigh said. She said she was shaking all over.

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It felt like my nerves were broke, my head just kept shaking back and forth," she said. "I thought I was gonna die."

Ashleigh remembers her mother pulling her out of the van. "I could barely walk," she says.

Ashleigh described the devices as large fireworks that shoot about 24 times, go really high and explode. "I didn't play with the fireworks," she said.

Ashleigh was taken to the USA Burn Center, the Women's and Children's Hospital, and then to the Shriner's Hospital "all in one day," her father, William Belcher, said.

Ashleigh has come through the traumatic experience with an attitude that any adult would be proud to have. She is anxious to go back to school. She hopes that she will be able to return to class in about a week.

Ashleigh still has bandages on her head, her chest, her arm and her leg, and she wears gloves on her hands.

"I've got to get my fingers to where I can write," she said, her eyes shining brightly amid the bandages. Ashleigh said most of her burns have healed, but she still has about six open wounds that hurt if they are touched, or she moves a certain way.

The healing wounds itch terribly, and Ashleigh's family takes turns scratching her back for her.

While in the hospital, Ashleigh said she went through physical therapy and counseling "because I kept having

nightmares."

She has to have special baths and have her wounds scrubbed daily, her father said. Ashleigh is still undergoing physical therapy, but she said the nightmares have stopped.

Ashleigh says she loves to sing and dance, and she enjoys playing with her Barbies. She enjoys playing with her brother Morgan, 12, and sister Kristen, 8, and they each take a "shift" to scratch her back.

Girls burned by fireworks leave hospital

By NICHOLAS COLE
THE SUN HERALD

JACKSON COUNTY — Both girls who were burned while playing with a box of fireworks they found last month have been released from the hospital and are in good spirits.

Ashleigh Belcher, 11, and Jenna Kennedy, 10, were playing with fireworks Jan. 5 in a 1993 Dodge Caravan in the 1700 block of Dailey Road in Gautier when the fireworks ignited.

The girls were trapped in the van until Ashleigh's mother, Karen Belcher, rescued them.

Both girls had second- and third-degree burns and were treated in separate hospitals for several weeks.

Sue Hillman, the girls' third-grade teacher at Lake Elementary School in Pascagoula, said Ashleigh was released from the burn unit of the Shriners Hospital in Galveston, Texas, on Thursday and made a surprise visit to classmates Friday. Jenna went back to school Monday and is doing well with her classwork, Hillman said.

Ashleigh's visit was an emotional one, because it was the first time the girls had seen

each other since the accident.

"The first thing Ashleigh did was run straight to Jenna and they hugged," Hillman said. "It was good to see them come out of the situation they were in."

Officials with the Gautier Fire Department said Friday they are still investigating the incident and would not say what kind of fireworks the girls were playing with. But Gautier police had described them as similar to flares.

Gautier Fire Marshal Raymond Friar said investigators believe the incident was an accident.